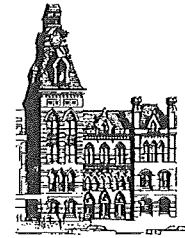




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**Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Judiciary Committee**

Regarding
H.B. 6676 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE PROJECT LONGEVITY INITIATIVE ON A STATE-WIDE BASIS

Submitted by
Eric Rey, Re-Entry Project Coordinator
April 1, 2013

Senator Coleman, Rep. Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6676 An Act Concerning Implementation of the Project Longevity Initiative on a State-Wide Basis.

The City of New Haven was fortunate to be the first community to have the opportunity to implement Project Longevity. A collaboration between federal, state and local law enforcement, community members and social service providers, Project Longevity is an initiative that seeks to reduce the crime and violence in New Haven, CT with a specific focus on homicides and violence while also developing effective and sustainable working relationships that changes our social norms and narratives to produce positive and productive community outcomes.

The project began in July 2012 with consultants from John Jay College and a program director funded by a federal grant and grew into a diverse community partnership leveraging existing community resources. The centerpiece of the program is the call-in – the forum in which identified members of citywide groups/gangs under supervision of Probation or Parole are invited to attend and receive a clear and consistent message from various members of the community (Law Enforcement, Service Providers, Moral Voices within the Community-Ex-offenders/Victims of Homicides and Violence/Clergy) indicating:

- Homicides and violence must stop, which is non-negotiable.
- We want to help you, if you want it.
- You are a valuable member of our Community. We want you to do better.
- As messengers, share this message you have heard with your, friends, associates, and the people you run with.

There have been two call-ins that have identified over 70 individuals who are associated with the gangs in the city responsible for the most violence.

There are two strategies that make this program successful. The first is connecting individuals with the services necessary to live productive lives. Coordinated by the City's Re-Entry initiative (which has one more year of federal funding) the program leverages support from:

- Workforce Alliance
- New Haven Housing Authority
- The Step Up Program
- Adult Education

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The continued state support of these programs is essential to ensure that individuals can be linked with the resources necessary to live productive lives so that they do not choose a life a crime. However, if they do, the second law enforcement strategy will bring the full force of the law on all associates of those who commit the crimes – affectively leveraging peer groups to help reduce crime. To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy, law enforcement needs all the tools for success. This includes adequate funding of the State Crime Lab and continued funding of the Shooting Task Forces funded through the Criminal Justice Budget of OPM.

While the project is still in its infancy, we are pleased with the preliminary results. Year to date shootings are below the trends from the last two years and several of the identified individuals are being connected with the opportunities necessary for success.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this transformative program.